THE VISIONS OF Sir Heiſter Ryley: WITH OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS.

Wednesday November 15. 1710.

From Stepney-Cauſeway, *Novemb.* 13.

I Have often reflected in my ſedate Thoughts, that Man of all Animals is the moſt unhappy; every one knows it by his own Experience, and by the Converſation he is obliged to have with his Neighbours. He that lives but ten or fifteen Years may be perfectly convinced of this Inſtance, and thoſe who are much intangled in Wordly Affairs, know this ſtill more clearly. Travellers read perpetual Lectures upon this Theme, they ſee every where the Monuments of Mens Misfortunes. In one Country they behold the Ruins of a flouriſhing City elſewhere they can hardly find the Place where the ſtately Piles once ſtood. I was led into this Thought by a Viſit I made to a Gentleman of my old Acquaintance, who is lately come from the *Eaſt-Indies*. He ſent me Word of his Arrival, and deſired I would come and dine with him. I am always full of Joy whenever I hear that any of my beſt Friends have eſcaped the dangerous Hazards incident from a barbarous People and the boiſterous Ocean. Upon this particular Occaſion I dreſs'd my ſelf in my Wedding-Cloaths, which are gay but a little old-faſhion'd; and went out ſomewhat earlier than uſual, to avoid being gaz'd on, as I commonly am in my Travels through the Streets of *London*. When I knocked at the Door, the Gentleman concluded it was I, and came out to meet me, but had forgot both my Phyſiognomy and my Voice; neither could I call to Mind that I had ever ſeen him, he was ſo mightily altered. We ſtood for a while looking upon each other as altogether Strangers, and could

not be perſwaded but that we were both miſtaken; till he ſaid, What is this Sir *Heiſtert* Sir *William*! (ſaid I, and threw my ſelf into his Arms) I am heartily glad to ſee you; I thought I ſhould never have heard of you more. He took me by the Hand, and led me into his Parlour. Do you not think (ſaid he) it is a long Time ſince you and I went on Board the *Royal Sovereign* in the Year 51. Upon this a Sigh came from his Heart, which moved me not a little; he would have repeated all the Misfortunes he had met with in a ſtrange and Heatheniſh Country. But to turn the Diſcourſe (ſays I) you look well and hearty, conſidering the heat of the Climate; and that it is now near ſixty Years from the time you firſt ſet ſail for the *Indies*. With ſuch Conferences of former Paſſages we paſs'd our time during a plentiful Feaſt. After Dinner I ask'd him how many Wives he had had ſince I ſaw him. This Queſtion I found gave him much Diſturbance. Do you not remember (ſays he) when you and I was in Company with your Niece, that we made a ſolemn Vow to remain ſingle till I returned; but contrary to my Expectation I had Notice by my Brother, that ſhe married immediately after my Departure, which has occaſioned to me much Grief, and kept me ſo long from my Native Country. Married (ſaid I) I really believe ſhe was a Maid laſt Night; ſhe lives juſt by. Indeed I have heard her often ſay that you have been one of the falſeſt Men living; for it was confirmed to her by your Relations that you married as ſoon as you got to *India*. I had no ſooner given him this Account, but he was aſtoniſhed, and could ſcarce believe me. Seeing him thus perplex'd, I ſtep'd out, and ſent a Meſſenger for his Miſtreſs, who in leſs than an Hour came into the Room, and ſate down by me. I would not for ſome time diſcover my Mind to either of them, that I might ſee whether they would by any of their Words take Notice of each other. Finding there was no Remembrance remaining between theſe two ancient Lovers, I told my Niece who the Gentleman was, and how the Caſe ſtood. Sir, ſays ſhe, ſure you are diſpoſed to divert your ſelf with my Misfortunes, and call to Mind paſt Diſappointments. He whom you ſpeak of, I ſuppoſe, is returned to his Duſt many Years ago. Here they ſtood looking upon each other for a conſiderable time; at laſt they found out by ſome Circumſtances the reality of my Relation, and with great Affection ſaluted each other. Sitting down, their iſſued a profound Silence; ſhe lean'd towards me and fainted. After the Paſſion of Joy was over, and ſhe come to her ſelf, Sir *William* (ſays I) have you forgot the Days, when the young Gentlemen thought this Lady one of the moſt beautiful Women in *Cheſhire*, and ſaid as ſhe paſſed by, this is the Fair One, whoſe Wit and Charms exceed thoſe of *Helena*. Yes (ſays he) I knew many brave Sparks in thoſe Times that languiſhed and dyed becauſe they could not obtain the Favours ſhe promiſed me.

me. This was followed by ſeveral other Diſcourſes. Friend *Ryley* (ſays he) you ſee the fine Image which all Eyes beheld with Admiration is much decayed and faded, yet all the Beauties in Nature cannot raiſe in me ſuch a pleaſing Idea as this excellent Virgin. Theſe Wrinkles that have now diſfigur'd her fine Face, are owing to the croſs Blows of Fortune and Time. However, I am as much taken with the Affection I conceive towards her for what ſhe was, as I am obliged in Gratitude for her faithful Conſtancy to me. I now ſee a Chaſte Love is as much beyond a Wanton Amour, as the bright Sun ſurpaſſes the ſhining of a Glow-Worm. I told him, what he ſaid upon this Head, I thought, admirably unfolded Nature in her naked Beauties; and that under the Innocency of deſcribing Love to an old Miſtreſs, he had introduced a Moral on the State of true Affections, which at once ſets forth the ſtrict Ties of both Sexes, where Vows of Fidelity have been made. To change the Converſation my Niece jok'd upon me; Sir *Heiſter*, you remember you came to my Father's Houſe one Afternoon with a Meſſage from Sir *William*, when I returned for Anſwer, that I would have no more to ſay to ſuch a young Stripling as he was. This put us into a long Field of Diſcourſe about a thouſand little Things that paſs'd between them in their youthful Days. Sir *William* told us, that he had freſh in his Memory the exact Words of the firſt Letter he ever wrote to his Miſtreſs. I deſired to hear the Contents of it, which he repeated, and are as follows.

MADAM,

'IF you knew how the Brightneſs of your Beauty ſhin'd in my Eyes, and what an Aſcendant it has over my Affections, you could not reſtrain your tender Paſſions from melting into Pity towards me. I ſhall wait with a longing Expectation to hear by your Domeſticks that you give me ſome Glimmerings of Hope, I ſhall once be admitted into your Converſation.

I ask'd my Niece whether ſhe could remember any thing of this Epiſtle. She told me, as well as if it had been but Yeſterday; for ſhe had the Original by her. I ſate with them till the Day was far advanced, one while in ſerious, and another while in merry Diſcourſe; which gives the only true Taſte to all Converſation, when the Company are of an agreeable Humour, and where that eaſineſs is to be found, which is peculiar to perfect Friendſhip. I went away, and left them together, but with Expectation to be in a ſhort time invited to the Wedding of theſe two unparallell'd Lovers.

From my Study, November 14.

I Have received a Letter ſubſcribed *J. C.* from *Panton-ſtreet*, wherein I find there are ſome Men ſtill to be heard of, that can dye for the Love of their Wives. A Lady being ſick in

in the Country, her Husband, whoſe Affairs obliged him to be in Town, was extremely diſturbed with the Apprehenſion of the Event, and not able to bear the greatneſs of his Sorrow, could ſcarce keep himſelf ſilent in the Street; for at every little Noiſe or Voice he heard, he ſtarted and ask'd every Body he ſaw, how his Wife did; though they knew nothing of her. One Servant after another was ſent to hear what the Phyſicians ſaid of her. At laſt, after a long waiting in hopes of good Tidings, he was informed that her Life began to be deſpaired of. Upon this, the Strength of his Body ſoon decay'd; and one Day being abroad upon Buſineſs, he had not time to get home; for as he was ſitting among ſome Women while a Coach was call'd, a ſudden want of Spirit, and a great Stupidneſs ſeized him; his Colour changing and his Speech being loſt. The Maid who attended him in his Fit call'd out for help. People came running into the Room to know what was the Matter. The Report of this ſudden Change had ſcarce reached his own Houſe; but Life had taken Wing, and was gone to dwell in a Region, where doubtleſs great Rewards are paid to ſuch conſtant Lovers; there being ſo very few of this ſort to be found, that I fear two Figures are ſufficient to caſt up the total Sum.

From York-Buildings, *at Ten a Clock in the Morning.*

SIR,

'I Am glad to ſee you in this looſe 'Age ſtanding up in Recommen-'dation of Vertue and our Sex. Some 'Authors of late have endeavoured 'to ruin the Reputation of both. 'When you ſpeak of Love and 'Pleaſure, there is ſomething I find 'mixt even among thoſe light Diſ-'courſes which ſerves to remind us, 'that Mortality confines our De-'lights and our Pains, and that the 'greateſt Beauty of our Perſons or 'the Advantages of our Lives are 'unable to protect us from the Death 'which all Mortals muſt ſubmit to; 'for as the Poet Pathetically has it,

Mors etiam Saxis Nominibuſque venit.

Death reaches Stones and Names, as well as Men.

I am, *&c.*

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